



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of MANAGEMENT
at LCC International University

Expert panel:

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>International Management</i>
State code	6211LX004
Type of studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (2 years);
Credit volume	90
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Master of Business Management
Language of instruction	English;
Minimum education required	Bachelor degree
Registration date of the study programme	2014-07-07

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS	4
1.2. EXPERT PANEL	4
1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION	5
1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT LCC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY	5
II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	6
III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS	7
3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM	7
3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES	10
3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT	12
3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT	14
3.5. TEACHING STAFF	18
3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES	21
3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION	22
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS	24
V. SUMMARY	26

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluations of study fields in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are based on the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport on 17 July 2019, Order No. V-835, and are carried out according to the procedure outlined in the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) on 31 December 2019, Order [No. V-149](#).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study process and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by HEI*; 2) *site visit of the expert panel to the HEI*; 3) *production of the external evaluation report (EER) by the expert panel and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

On the basis of this external evaluation report of the study field SKVC takes a decision to accredit study field either for 7 years or for 3 years. If the field evaluation is negative then the study field is not accredited.

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 3 years** if one of the evaluation areas is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

The study field and cycle are **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas is evaluated as unsatisfactory (1 point).

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on *24th of May, 2023*.

Prof. dr. Teresa Paiva (panel chairperson) *Professor of Management and Economics
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Prof. dr. Erik Reimer Larsen, *Professor of Management, Department of Management, Aarhus
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Department of Marketing and International Business, University of Turku, Finland;*

Mrs Dovile Alijosiute, *Senior Project Manager, a/s Danske Bank, Lithuania;*

Ms Joana Jasilionytė, *student at Vytautas Magnus University.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by SKVC. Along with the SER and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	2022-2023 Research Productivity in Management and Economics Research field
2.	Additional information.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT LCC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

LCC International University (hereinafter LCC) is a private institution of higher education in Lithuania. It provides Christian liberal arts education within a diverse learning community following a North America model of education, with a focus on student's engagement in their own learning, using problem-solving and interactive participation rather than passive reception of information. It is organised in a vertical chart with seven offices and the Academic Office has fourteen departments, one of which is the International Management Program. The study programme of International Management is integrated in a Christian value-based model of education, which builds discipline-specific educational content upon a broad foundation in the liberal arts and humanities. The study field offers a programme that seeks innovation for social impact at different levels and to provide NGOs with leadership, business and environmental sustainability and philanthropy, achieving the financial and operational needs of the organisation.

In the last evaluation, LCC was advised to make some improvements that seem to be still present, such as the opportunities for students' individual paths and specialisation opportunities, the social partner's engagement in the study programmes, and the lack of students' community.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *second cycle* of the *Management* study field and at LCC International University is given a **negative** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	1
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	2
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	2
	Total:	17

*1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies.

2 (satisfactory) - the area meets the minimum requirements, and there are fundamental shortcomings that need to be eliminated.

3 (good) - the area is being developed systematically, without any fundamental shortcomings.

4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings;

5 (excellent) - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

Study aims, outcomes and content shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions)

The master degree in evaluation is under the Lithuanian legislation and it should be offered in Lithuania to prepare students to work within the Lithuanian labour market context. However, it is important that this degree prepares students to work also within an international context. In SER the justification of the study programme compliance with the labour market and society needs is focused on an international perspective and did not explain how it impacts within the Lithuanian context (SER, section 1.1. - pages 7-8).

In SER it is possible to understand that the LCC believes that it offers a study programme with an international approach, providing value to companies and employees, by creating an understanding of global business issues, ethical actions, social responsibility, business and environmental sustainability. This is can be based on the fact of international experience and worldwide connections of LCC, but the external committee did not find a formal and strong business engagement in the LCC International Management study programme. The Study Programme showed a connection with some multinational companies, (e.g Chick-fil-A or Ismira Recruitment and Crewing Agency), but besides this individual link, there was not a clear engagement and communication between LCC and NGOs or other international business companies. In particular, in Lithuania, the connection identified during the external committee visit was mainly in an informal approach with the Municipality which does not mainly focus on international management but uses the University to try and attract students to live in Klaipėda after they graduate and is not that relevant for reviewing and improving the contents of the study programme/field. Besides this cooperation does not particularly impacts the municipality or the International Management (IM) study programme much since most of its students are international students and alumni after graduation do not work or live in Lithuania.

3.1.2. Evaluation of the conformity of the field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI

LCC's mission and strategy ("LCC prepares students to positively contribute to society and prepares them for thousands of diverse careers through a commitment to a quality educational model that integrates a Christian worldview" - SER, pg8; "...a place invested in training individuals who will serve as civic leaders, cultural ambassadors, and promoters of understanding and communication between citizens around the world" - SER, pg. 9) are clearly linked with the study programme in terms of the values-based approach and the North American education model. Civic engagement, multidisciplinary knowledge, and critical

thinking are some examples of learning outcomes in line with LCC’s mission and education approach.

3.1.3. Evaluation of the compliance of the field and cycle study programme with legal requirements

There is an alignment with legal requirements, presented in SER, by listing all important rulings and regulations upon which the study programme rests. General requirements for the second-cycle study programmes are presented in Table No.1.

Table No. 1 Study programmes’ **International Management** compliance to general requirements for *second cycle study programmes*

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 60 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	0 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	28%
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	72%

The expert panel has to mention that the LCC has on-site weeks for students that need to come to LCC campus and do their assignments or take exams etc. Nevertheless, the expert panel learnt from the meeting with the students that the students do not really have to go to Lithuania and to LCC campus depending on their availability. Therefore, the mentioned fact raises doubts that the legal requirement to have at least 5 percent of contact hours (not online) is met.

3.1.4. Evaluation of compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programmes

Analysing SER’s Table 3 and the Appendix 15 (MA IM Degree Program 2-year plan 2022-2023), it is possible to visualise the study programme courses and assessment, but it is difficult to comprehend the connection between the aim of an International Management study programme and the content of its courses. During the visit, the external committee could understand that the main aims are not International Management in itself but a management

study programme focusing on leadership, human resources and social management. This is reinforced by SER's (page 12) description of the main areas of the study programme and the specific learning outcomes (SER's pages 13 and 14).

Although the teaching/learning methods are not clearly described in the documents and considering the North American education model, it is possible to observe and establish the link between teaching and learning and the assessments described since they all consist of individual work. However, it would also be good and should be aligned with the international approach of the programme and to introduce group assignments to allow international comparisons and critical thinking. The focus on individual work promoted does not allow an international approach to the study programme. Accordingly, with this analysis, the external committee concludes that there isn't a good match between the aim of an International Management study programme foreseen by LCC and the learning outcomes. In general, the experts can conclude that the study programme should not be called International Management but NGO Management or Leadership Management. The expert panel observed that because the aim of the programme is not compatible with learning outcomes, the programme and the field of management has a fundamental shortcoming that should be resolved by LCC.

Overall, the programme should be rebranded or renamed as for now the program is misleading and does not correlate with learning outcomes, this discrepancy is not in line with the order of the ministry of education V-1075 2.21 - the name of the program is misleading as study content is not related to the International Management program name.

3.1.5. Evaluation of the totality of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules, which ensures consistent development of competences of students

In terms of consistent student competences development SER (page 13-14) gives a straightforward description of how this is achieved, accordingly with the structure of the study programme foreseen. It explains aim by aim and what kind of learning outcomes students should achieve, linking the study programme and the aims can be understood how studies are planned to promote the learning outcome desired. It is a good explanation on paper, however, there is not enough evidence that the desired learning outcomes are achieved since it is too focused on the teacher's assessment and experience during the online courses and not in the pedagogical methods and the education tools used.

3.1.6. Evaluation of opportunities for students to personalise the structure of field study programmes according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes

At the moment there is no possibility for students to elect optional courses within the study programme. According to SER (page 15), this situation will be corrected with a set of four options possible next academic year, but meanwhile, students only can choose a specific focus on the course assignments. As mentioned already, during the last evaluation, LCC was advised to make some improvements for opportunities for students' individual paths and specialisation opportunities but still the lack of choices for students persists.

3.1.7. Evaluation of compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements

The master thesis presented themes are adequate considering the course's content and integrated themes that are important within the student's work and areas of expertise. There is a Thesis Handbook 2022-2023 (Appendix 14), and SER describes an adequate evaluation procedure. The thesis topics are linked to the study programme offered and are chosen by the students. The student's thesis is not linked to the social partners' needs, in particular Lithuanian social partners, and, as stated in SER, pg. 17 "This possibility will be investigated and encouraged in the future", is something to be thought of in the future.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The North American education model provides a hands-on approach that is appreciated by the students.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The study programme is not an International Management one, there should be a rebrand. The content of the programme is not related to the name but the programme is called international management.

2. The focus on individual work does not allow an international approach to the study programme.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

Links between science (art) and study activities shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.2.1. Evaluation of the sufficiency of the science (applied science, art) activities implemented by the HEI for the field of research (art) related to the field of study

While LCC has increased the number of publications over the last years, the research has a very limited connection to the degree in international management (2017: 3; 2018: 1; 2019: 2; 2020: 9; 2021: 9). It is needed that the research areas are more closely connected to the degree program, e.g., internationalisation, cultural differences, market entry etc. that represents typical areas in international management. The expert panel was surprised that the teaching staff mentioned that the international faculty and international student group makes the program in itself an *International* management program but the expert panel wants to make a clear point: the international staff and foreign students does not make the research and content of the program international, e.g. just because research has been carried out in different countries does not make it particularly relevant to International Management (one could argue that this makes it management research). It would be necessary if a fraction of the publications were targeted towards more mainstream journals within the international management area.

Most of the publications provided by the LCC have an affiliation for the authors, others do not, e.g., Saunders, K., & Locke, L. (2020). During the meeting and asked about this, the faculty

members said that they normally used their “home affiliation” if they published and not LCC, making it difficult to evaluate the amount of research produced by full-time LCC faculty vs that produced by the part-time faculty. Checking the list of scientific publications provided by the LCC - some publications were not even scientific and as mentioned before most of scientific publications are not made by LCC but by other HEIs, it is not clear if the LCC has the permission of those HEIs to consider the publications as their own.

3.2.2. Evaluation of the link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology

The expert panel has observed a relatively weak link between the development of research in international management/international business and the degree. This is true for the research as discussed above, as well as the courses in the degree and the general development in international management. It would be beneficial if there were a stronger link between the current topics in international management and the degree as well as the research. The only positive aspect would be that some of the student theses were made into research papers with the help of the teaching staff.

3.2.3. Evaluation of conditions for students to get involved in scientific (applied science, art) activities consistent with their study cycle

There is relatively little possibility for students of working with social partners during the study or on thesis topics provided by social partners because LCC does not engage with social partners within the students’ assignments, training or thesis. However, many of the students seem to have employment during their studies, so there is a possibility that they might apply the learning to the position they occupy with an organisation. It is clear that many of the students use their own organisation or an organisation in the areas where they live as the case for the thesis. It should be noted that judging from the thesis titles provided, most of the thesis only deals with single-country issues and not international management issues, e.g., Communication in the Faroe Islands, various issues in Iraq or general management issues as glass ceilings. It is necessary that the topics of the final thesis are closely aligned with issues of international and cross-national management. There are, however, examples of thesis which have been published as well as the possibility for students to be presenting at student conferences.

Overall, the link between science and studies is not suitable at all. Starting with the misleading content of the programme which translates to the scientific output which is not related to international management. The scientific output is very low and most of the publications are not LCC’s and some would need to increase their quality. The final theses done by the students are mainly done on single nation topics/ problems and their current job titles. In other words, work assignments and final thesis are mostly related to project management (where most of the students are working in NGOs), so the theses are not international management.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Some theses have been turned into research papers with the help of the faculty.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. No indication of link between the state of the art in international management and the degree.
2. The research is not linked to the main purpose of the degree, i.e., international management.
3. Limited engagement with the social partners in a systematic way for scientific output.
4. No scientific publications inside LCC that are relevant to the management study field.
5. Some scientific publications are not even scientific publications but references.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

Student admission and support shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process

For admission to the second-cycle program, the responsibility lies with the University. Admission to the MA International Management (IM) study program at LCC is determined based on four criteria: the interview, motivation letter, and application; university grades; supporting documents, including two letters of recommendation; and English proficiency test scores (TOEFL® iBT, IELTS ACADEMIC).

According to SER (Table 11), there was an increase in the total number of applications submitted between 2019-2020 (the total is 8) and 2020-2021 (the total is 20). This increase could be attributed to enhanced marketing efforts, particularly in the Middle East, or the growing interest in online studies during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the number of applicants decreased in 2021-2022 (total was 6), with only four students enrolling in the study program.

The majority of students studying in the MA IM program are foreign students. Overall, the fluctuating number of students isn't a great thing for the University but also this might show the results of some problems that have been seen in the previous evaluation areas.

3.3.2. Evaluation of the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its application

There are defined procedures for the evaluation of foreign qualifications and partial studies. During the period being reviewed, LCC made various recognition decisions for admission to its study programs.

LCC also offers prior learning assessments to recognise non-formal learning from work. The procedures, based on an order by the Minister of Education and Science, have not received any applications in the past three academic years for recognition.

The procedures organised by LCC for recognition of various qualifications are adequate and understandable.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

LCC's Center for International Education (CIE) offers LCC students' various opportunities to engage in international study, teaching, and training exchanges through partnerships with 78 institutions.

In the past, there has been a lack of incoming students participating in the MA IM program through mobility programs. Additionally, to date, no MA IM students have had the opportunity to engage in Erasmus or other mobility programs.

One of the main reasons why students do not participate in international mobility programs is because they are already international students and have other responsibilities, such as work, family, and more, which hinder their participation.

As the expert panel mentioned previously, the program content cannot be supported by the fact that academic staff and students are mostly of foreign origins. Considering that the program is called International management - the expert panel suggests that at least some of the students participated in some mobility programs. The mobility can be short-term, even though the best would be that the students would go for long-term mobility programs but considering the nonexistence of international mobility - short-term would be a great start.

3.3.4. Assessment of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students of the field

LCC provides comprehensive support to its students in various aspects, including academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support.

Academic support is offered to students in different stages of their studies, starting from orientation where new MA IM students receive the MA Student Handbook and training for the online learning management system. Summer residency sessions are held annually, providing lectures, orientation events, and thesis defence practice sessions for students.

In terms of financial support, LCC ensures affordable tuition for the MA IM program, with no differentiated fees based on the country of origin. Discounts are available for LCC alumni and employees, and Lithuanian citizens receive an income tax deduction for tuition payments. State scholarships are available for international students from specific countries, and the Middle East Scholars Aid program supports war-affected students from Syria and Iraq. Excluding scholarships provided by the Lithuanian state, the university does not have any scholarships, including social partner scholarships.

Psychological support is offered through individual counselling services provided by professional counsellors. Workshops on stress management, mindfulness, and mental health

wellness are conducted to address various psychological concerns. However, students didn't know about this possibility. When analysing SER, it becomes evident that students don't feel like they are part of the university community.

Additional practical support is provided by LCC's Migration Office, assisting students with travel documentation and Resident Life staff, and facilitating housing during residency sessions. The MA IM Program Director serves as the academic advisor, ensuring proper registration and addressing students' requests for academic assistance.

The expert panel concludes that the support system is adequate but experts would be encouraged to provide more specialised support and also to provide LCC scholarships to students not only discounts.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Prospective students usually acquire information about the MA IM program by visiting the LCC website and engaging with social media advertisements. To offer a thorough understanding of the program, the university arranges webinars. Marketing efforts, including social media campaigns and the production of brochures and posters, are overseen by the LCC Marketing Office.

The adequacy of program information and advising is evaluated through surveys conducted among students and alumni.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The admission processes are clear and well communicated.
2. There are clear procedures for the evaluation of foreign qualifications, partial studies, and prior non-formal and informal learning.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The university lacks a variety of scholarships, including social partner scholarships.
2. There are no students who are outgoing or incoming to mobility programs.
3. Students don't know about the possibilities of getting psychological support.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

Studying, student performance and graduate employment shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.4.1. Evaluation of the teaching and learning process that enables to take into account the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes

LCC university provides full-time international management master's degree studies. All studies are in online mode which as mentioned before raises questions on being in accordance with national requirements to implement at least 5 percent face to face of the programme. The Management Department together with the Program Director defines course descriptions, learning outcomes, and the course teacher is responsible for course content and choosing methods that best fit the course.

The teaching process includes theoretical lectures and practical parts – discussions, projects with topics often of the student's choice, case studies, guest lectures, and visits to foreign or local businesses (business tours).

LCC University uses a Socratic method to engage students in lectures, debates, discussions and integrate learning methods in projects-based assessments and also uses Bloom's taxonomy to achieve learning outcomes.

Small class size and teaching methods (reflections, projects, research papers, exams, posting videos of student presentations, collaborative platforms such as blogs, websites, or chat forums) allow faculty administration and course teachers to adjust teaching methods to best meet the learning needs of students.

As LCC University is an international university, most of the teachers are foreign, and all lectures are in English, Students' English level skills were identified on a very high level.

LCC, over the last 3 years, organised visits to the companies: Horsch Company, Whatagraph, Klaipeda Port Authority, Chick-fil-A, Ismira Recruitment and Crewing Agency and had guest lectures from organisations: The Cabo Coffee Company in Mexico, The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, Gerda, Saint-Gobain, Dallas Baptist University. Students identified that some lectures are recorded, and there is no possibility to ask questions during the lectures. The expert panel group recommends choosing such teaching methods, which always allow students to ask questions and discuss needed topics when they are explained to all students and not clarify them in separate consultations.

During the site visit Expert Panel group were informed that most social partners are located in North America and review study materials not in a formal way. Only a few local social partners identified collaboration regarding study planning and study material review.

LCC provided additional information that social partners are officially involved in the program and content review process and participates in changes submission. Even if a formal way to collaborate with social partners is established after conversation with social partners during the site visit Expert panel group identified that social partners' opportunities and needs are not used enough to ensure that study quality is up to social partners' needs. Social partners' involvement and contribution in study planning or subject content development should be improved.

Expert panel group identified the need to have more guest's international business representatives' lectures to share their practical knowledge specifically about international business management. The University provided the panel with additional information on guest lectures which is appreciated with the expert panel and we suggest to make these lectures consistent as too few guest lecturers were involved during the evaluated period.

Even if all LCC lectures are online, an expert panel group identified that most of all practical part methods are traditional and different digital tools are not used in the lectures. Expert panel group recommends using more digital tools in both theoretical and practical parts of the

lectures. Different digital tools would create students' ability to solve questions and problems in new innovative ways and would create value for them in their careers.

Independent work consists of about 72 % of total hours (in total, 115 hours from 160 hours). The expert panel group identified that there is no group work exercises. Group work develops teamwork ability which is one of the key skills in the career. The expert panel group recommends including group work exercises as one of the teaching methods and also using different digital tools, which would allow students from different countries to work together as a team.

LCC University uses a common assessment system - LCC Narrative Grading Rubric posted in the Moodle LMS. Possible types of assessments: quizzes, tests and exams, projects, and presentations. The type and frequency of assessments are agreed upon with students in the first lecture on the subject.

Learning outcomes achievement progress is evaluated on a 10-point scale (5 is minimum). Interim assessments are also applicable as no single grade within a course is worth more than 30% (out of 100%) of the final course grade (2 exceptions - 2 thesis courses during which the students prepare one assignment, final thesis) (SER p. 39).

After studies, graduates can continue towards a doctoral degree or other specialisation in management.

3.4.2. Evaluation of conditions ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs

The Registrar and the Student Success Center are coordinating the process to ensure equal access to the buildings and need for additional support. Most of all LCC premises are accessible for students with movement disability (except staff administration), LCC university uses Windows operating system, which includes fully integrated Accessibility Technology and Tools. Additionally, LCC provided information about library adoption for students with special needs: online databases are accessible in audio format, making it possible for students with visual impairment to use them: a computer keyboard with large keys for students with visual impairment, special sitting desks, orthopaedic chairs, special ergonomic keyboard stands that allow people with motor disabilities to work at the computer in a sitting or standing position.

LCC teachers and administration staff were also instructed on how to work with students with special needs, how to identify students with special needs, which LCC university premises satisfy students with special needs and where LCC needs to improve.

3.4.3. Evaluation of the systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress

LCC University uses a common assignment system - LCC Narrative Grading Rubric posted in the Moodle LMS.

Assessment methods are described in 3.4.1. Course structure with planned assessments days, teaching methods, type of assessments and assessment criteria is presented in the first lecture of the course.

Students' progress is reviewed systematically during the semester. Small groups allow teachers to provide feedback to the students directly and through the Moodle system. If teachers or (and)

administration sees the risk that students will fail the course, there is additional support from the instructor or Program director.

The Moodle system allows students to see study plans and plan study progress. Also, assessment days or due dates can be adjusted based on personal students' needs with a separate agreement with the teacher.

3.4.4. Evaluation of employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field

LCC University tracks only Lithuanian students' employment during the last 12 months. The main information source used is Lithuania's official education management information system, ŠVIS. During the reported period, employment decreased by 38%, but this number does not show real employment as LCC University international business management students are mostly foreign students, and this data is not tracked.

After graduation, LCC graduates receive an email with an Alumni survey with questions about studies preparation for the career and course material used in practice after the studies. The survey answers show positive graduates' feedback about their studies and preparation for their careers. Information about improvement areas can be added as open comments, but there are no separate questions about improvement areas.

After conversation with Alumni during the site visit, the expert panel group identified that Alumni lack stronger participation in study planning and course material review process, Alumni survey, and other unofficial communication channels with Alumni does not include topic about studies quality improvement based on Alumni feedback. After the site visit LCC provided additional information on how Alumni are involved in study planning and course material review processes, but their practical input value does not change.

Wider statistics data about positive career changes after the studies and information about foreign students' employment after the studies would let LCC University attract students and have a wider understanding of the study field impact on the graduate's career.

Alumni involvement in studies planning and material review process would have a positive impact on the studies' quality because it would be real experience about needed improvement or focus areas.

3.4.5. Evaluation of the implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination

The main documents which regulate academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are: The Code of Academic Ethics, Academic Catalog Graduate Programs, and Code of Academic Ethics.

LCC University does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating, according to procedures, such cases should be evaluated 0 on the assignment and registered on Academic Misconduct Incident Report to the Registrar's Office. As the main tool to search plagiarism, LCC is using Turnitin.

The Code of Academic Ethics also regulates faculty members' behaviour with students, "not discriminate among students in their grades on the basis of religion, ethnicity, and other characteristics". No cases were registered during the last 3 years.

The expert panel group identified that even if the LCC University main procedures are in place, Students have a weak understanding of LCC University procedures, and they would mostly rely on strong collaboration with the teachers asking for their help.

3.4.6. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies

LCC is in process of setting up a Dispute Committee, at this moment students can raise their appeals to the instructors or to the Academic Vice President. The Committee on Academic Standing is the first decision maker, and the final decision is made by the Academic Vice President. No cases were registered during the last 3 years.

The expert panel group identified that even if the LCC university's main procedures are in place, Students have a weak understanding of LCC University procedures, and they would mostly rely on strong collaboration with the teachers asking for their help.

Overall, the expert panel finds it puzzling that the international students do not use any appeal procedures. LCC should always encourage the students not only to solve problems in informal ways but also use formal means of procedures.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Small classes and close collaboration between the students, teachers, and the Program director allows the possibility to individualise tasks for each student and help the student to achieve their learning outcomes based on the student's needs.
2. As LCC University is an international university, most of the teachers are foreign, and all lectures are in English, Students' English level skills were identified on a very high level.
3. Teachers and administration staff were instructed how to work with students with special needs, know which premises satisfy students with special needs where LCC needs to improve and know how to identify students with special needs.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Not all chosen teaching methods create opportunities for the students to ask and clarify questions during the lecture. Questions and discussions during the lecture would clarify topics for all students at the same time and would reduce additional consultation time for the students and for the teacher.
2. Used teaching methods are more traditional; no innovative digital tools were identified as practical and (or) theoretical part teaching methods.
3. Missing formation of teamwork and teamwork skills development as no group work exercises were identified.
4. Small part of international business management representatives in the practical part of the lectures.
5. Even if the social partners and Alumni are part of official study planning and study material review processes, social partners and Alumni needs and opportunities are not used in sufficient level.
6. Weak statistics data about all LCC university graduates' employment, only statistical data about Lithuanian students, which consists of a small part of all study field students.
7. Even if academic integrity, tolerance, non-discrimination and appeal procedures are in place, students have weak understanding about LCC procedures, and they would mostly rely on strong collaboration with the teachers asking for their help.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Study field teaching staff shall be evaluated in accordance with the following indicators:

3.5.1. Evaluation of the adequacy of the number, qualification and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff within a field study programme(s) at the HEI in order to achieve the learning outcomes

There are eleven (11) faculty who teach International Management courses. The qualifications of the MA IM faculty meet the legal requirements for second-cycle programs. All of the faculty members who teach in the program have a doctoral degree and a long experience in academia. 5 out of 11 teachers in the programme are permanent faculty, whereas of the remaining 6, 3 have taught in the programme for more than three years.

In addition to academic qualifications, all staff members also have practical experience in business organisations and/ or in NGOs. Some of the staff are either current or former business owners, and some of them have experience as executives.

New staff is recruited through a formal procedure of interviews. Recommendations from previous staff members are mentioned as a recruitment channel. As this may be a good way to guarantee that the new staff fits in with the old, this might limit the recruitment to a smaller circle, and therefore not guarantee the best competences for the programme. The official recruitment criteria are not provided in the self-evaluation report. One difficulty related to the teaching staff is that most of the LCC is that the teaching staff inside the IM programme is recruited for a semester/academic year and this model could be considered as teaching university but this category does not exist in Lithuania, so teaching staff usually teaches a course and returns to their home academic institution. This uniqueness brings a shortcoming for scientific research as most teaching staff stay only for a bit, they do not leave any research output behind them and afterwards the institutional memory disappears.

All of the staff have academic degrees, a long experience, and are associated with another international university. This can be considered both as a strength and as a weakness, as being associated with another university is clearly an advantage from the point of view of professional development as well as the international connectedness of the University. At the same time, it may cause the staff to distract from the development of LCC in favour of their international university.

More than 70% of MA IM faculty members are native speakers of English. Others are checked for English proficiency during a job interview that includes participation by a native speaker—the Program Director and/or the Academic Vice President. For the non-native English speakers, the University has an intensive language programme.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility (not applicable to studies carried out by HEIs operating under the conditions of exile)

Regarding staff mobility, the self-evaluation report emphasises the fact that many of the staff members are associated with North American universities, and as such are part of their mobility programmes. At the same time, it is highlighted that the international staff has had limited possibilities in participating in European mobility programmes.

Regardless of the origins of the teaching staff, the academic personnel do not participate in any mobility programs and the fact that the teaching staff comes from abroad does not mean they participate in mobility programs. The teaching staff might be participating in a mobility program and coming to LCC but if the staff comes from abroad to teach according to their employment agreement, this does not count as mobility of the teaching staff. Besides the programme has 5 teachers that are permanent staff members who did not participate in any outgoing mobility.

3.5.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff

LCC reports possibilities for staff development. A professional development budget supports faculty to attend and present at conferences and engage in small scale research projects. For faculty members who also work at other institutions, professional development is overseen by their home institutions. In addition, an incentive system is in place for research published under LCC. The university also supports research by allowing a lower teaching load for staff members to engage in research activities.

The University has an official professional development and promotion policy. Funding is in place for attending seminars and conferences, sabbatical leaves etc.

In addition, the University organises seminars and pedagogical workshops to provide the staff with opportunities to develop their professional skills.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The majority of the teaching staff are academics with a long career in teaching.
2. The University is well connected especially to North American institutes of higher education through international faculty.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The recruitment of new staff is based on personal relationships. Even though this has not been a problem so far, it might not be the best way to obtain the best knowledge resources in the future.
2. Many of the staff members have a main affiliation with other higher education institutions. Their allocation of time and other personal resources to LCC could be unclear.
3. The development of staff as well as the international connections of the staff, are based on their roles in their own universities. Even though this could be considered partly as a strength, it could also challenge the benefits for LCC.
4. Because the teaching staff is teaching for small periods, there is no mobility whatsoever.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Study field learning facilities and resources should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

3.6.1. Evaluation of the suitability and adequacy of the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies to ensure an effective learning process

The university has a selection of lecture halls and computer labs for teaching. In their self-evaluation report, the LCC acknowledges that the current premises are too small for the current volume of studies. At the same time, the LCC has provided a detailed plan for improving the conditions with investments. All the classrooms are equipped with desktop computers, smart boards, web cameras and microphones that also enable hybrid and remote lectures.

All campus buildings are served by a Wi-Fi system. LAN service is also provided to all classrooms, faculty and staff offices, and dormitory rooms. In the self-evaluation report the University acknowledges the limited capacity of the Wi-Fi especially considering dormitories. However, the University also reports that corrective actions are taken.

The university utilises Moodle's learning management system. The system is reported to be used by all the courses of the International Management programme.

The University library has a collection of around 3000 books in economics, business, and management. Physical copies of course books are included in the collection for the use of the students, of course this might not matter as most students study online and have the opportunity to skip the mandatory physical arrival to campus as was said by students. In addition, the university provides the students and staff access to a large collection of online databases but mainly centralised from the Lithuanian university libraries. These resources are available for use also outside the campus area through a proxy server.

3.6.2. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies

In the self-evaluation report, LCC International University acknowledges the need for additional teaching facilities. At the same time, the University has a detailed investment plan for a new building that would solve this issue. In addition to additional classrooms, the investment would also include renewed premises for the University's library, which would also improve both the self-study possibilities of the students as well as the research of the teaching staff.

The University IT department coordinates the acquisition in cooperation with the administration and faculty. This can be considered a good approach, as the coordination of the IT department is likely to ensure that acquisitions are made with the best knowledge available.

The journal and database subscriptions are reviewed annually based on the current and potential usage by students and faculty. This allows the redirection of resources from underutilised to more urgently needed on annual bases.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Library and IT resources for teaching, research and study can be considered sufficient.
2. The acquisition of the resources is coordinated by the IT department, securing the best knowledge and competences for the procurement.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Low usage of the facilities by master students.
2. The facilities are considered partly insufficient at the same time, the university has a detailed plan for improving the facilities to meet the need.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Study quality management and publicity shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.7.1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies

The internal quality system has a set of committees that LCC depends on any changes and the committees are responsible for approving the changes made in the study field/ programmes. The University has a systematic collection of feedback from the students based on end-of-course evaluations. The feedback is given to the individual faculty member by the program director if there are issues raised in the feedback. The student survey is complemented by alumni surveys, which are used by different members of the administration to get feedback on other aspects. There is no direct student or faculty involvement in, e.g., a program committee, which reviews and discusses the results and possible future changes based on these. It might be beneficial to involve students and faculty more in the degree development and this low involvement is a shortcoming of the study field.

3.7.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders (students and other stakeholders) in internal quality assurance

Surveys of alumni concerning satisfaction with the program and the academic experience are organised by LCC. Social partners are involved in an informal way through business tours and other encounters. There is no systematic way in which the social partners give feedback to LCC. The alumni reported good personal relations with the faculty but no systematic institutional relationship. The higher education institution would benefit from a more systematic engagement with the social partners and the alumni.

3.7.3. Evaluation of the collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes

There seems to be a less systematic collection of some of the data that could benefit the LCC International University than could be desired. This is particularly true in relation to alumni and social partners, while the nature of a mostly online degree might make this more difficult,

it is still possible to collect this information and get the feedback through online meetings instead of face-to-face meetings. The public information about the degrees seems adequate.

In general, the gathered information is used but there is also room for improvement. The expert panel suggests encouraging students to be critical as this would help to bring new ideas for the study field and the programme.

3.7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the SKVC or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI

The university collects data about the degree in a variety of different ways, both systematic (e.g., students' course feedback) and informal (e.g., from social partners). The students are satisfied with the collection of the data, while the social partners are only to a very limited degree involved in the future design and improvement of the degree, and when they are, it is mainly in terms of providing topics for, e.g., thesis.

These low involvement of social partners and alumni are a shortcoming of the study field and LCC needs to revise its quality assurance system and in general increase the level of quality culture.

There is in general the positive outlook from LCC and they would like for students to be incorporated in improvement of study quality but there are some recommendations for this area. Students cannot be fully immersed into the study quality process as the absolute majority of the studies are online which means that the students do not really face the daily life of being a student in LCC – they have their online lectures which sometimes are recorded, they do their individual assignments (with the lack of group works) etc. This leads the studies to become more of courses which they have to pass and not have a fully academic experience. Of course, this is a path chosen by LCC but the expert panel would strongly encourage LCC to rethink their approach on online study modules if the institution would like to perfect their processes to be a truly good University. Overall, there are areas to be improved as soon as possible but at least the minimal quality is ensured in LCC.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Systematic collection of student feedback.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Very limited involvement of students and other stakeholders in evaluating feedback and implementing future changes to the program.
2. Weak links to and little engagement with social partners

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There should be a rebrand of the study programme since it is not an International Management one. 2. The students should have group assignments to help build an international community and perspective, as intended by the programme.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No indication of a link between the state of the art in international management and the degree. 2. The research is not linked to the main purpose of the degree, i.e., international management. 3. Encourage engagement with the social partners in a systematic way. 4. Science should be done in a systematic way.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The university has to address the absence of scholarships, including social partner scholarships, by taking proactive measures to establish a range of scholarship options. 2. Make more effort to motivate students to participate in academic mobility programs. 3. Communicate more with students about the various possibilities to get support.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To invite more guest lectures from international business representatives to share their practical knowledge about international business management. 2. To review and adjust teaching methods so that Students can clarify topics or questions on time during the lecture. Time for questions during the lecture would reduce additional consultation hours for the teachers and would create an open discussion environment for the students. 3. To use more innovative digital tools as teaching methods for theoretical or (and) practical parts of the lectures. 4. To strengthen teamwork and teamwork skills development, adding group work exercises by using various digital tools which would allow students from different countries to work as a team. 5. To strengthen Students' knowledge about academic integrity, tolerance, non-discrimination and appeal procedures. 6. To strengthen social partners and Alumni involvement in study planning and study material review continuously to ensure that

	<p>study quality is up to social partners or potential employers and needs and adjusted based on real experience feedback from Alumni.</p>
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The recruitment of new staff is based on personal relationships, and it should be open and competitive to attract the best. 2. Many of the staff members have a main affiliation with another university. Their allocation of time and other personal resources to LCC seems to be unclear. 3. The development of staff as well as the international connections of the staff, are based on their roles in their own universities which might lead to a disengagement towards LCC.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage students to come to the facilities that are in Klaipėda.
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very limited involvement of students and other stakeholders in evaluating feedback and implementing future changes to the program. 2. Weak links to and little engagement with social partners.

Since the recommendations are linked to a non-accreditation of the second cycle Management study field with its one International Management programme, LCC should guide its present students so they achieve a level of knowledge adequate to a master's degree in Management, such as:

- The lectures must include group discussions on international management contents;
- The assessment must include group assignments;
- The final thesis theme must have a focus on International Management;
- The final thesis should be explored into a research paper and/or scientific presentation;
- The research conducted in management study field needs to be done by the teaching staff;
- The research publications should meet the minimum requirements of science;
- LCC needs to conduct its own research rather than using other universities' publications.
- Either the name of the programme needs to be changed or the programme contents should be redone entirely for students to finish their studies.
- University needs to ensure that the students come to the facilities to meet the requirement that at least 5 percent of the studies are done face to face in the premises.

V. SUMMARY

LCC is a private High Education Institution that offers a master's degree in the Management field. It is possible to observe several problems regarding the study programmes: the disengagement of the teachers through online classrooms that sometimes are videos of the teacher's talks; the very weak link between teaching and research; the non-engagement of the social partners and its reflection within the study programmes. This overshadows what could be a very interesting study programme focused on NGO/social management, directly connected to the student's profession and work field, with experienced foreign teachers that are compromised with the LCC goals and mission.

Unfortunately, the expert panel could not give a positive accreditation to the management study field in LCC as already mentioned the link between science and studies is almost non-existent. The problem begins with the programme in itself. The contents of the programme are mostly management in general and the expert panel thought that perhaps the content is hidden inside the names of the courses of the syllabi but in fact they are not fully related to international management. The teaching staff shocked the expert panel when they mentioned that the programme becomes an "*international*" because of the foreign descent of the teaching staff and most of the students. The teaching staff and their experience in North American HEIs is a good thing, but there is a shortcoming when the teaching staff does not do scientific research inside LCC. This brings to the main issue of the study field - the research is low and in very bad scientific quality. Also, the expert group had the discussion: can the research that is affiliated not with LCC but with their home HEI be considered as LCC's publications. There were some other issues with quality assurance but all were mentioned in the report. The expert group would encourage LCC to rethink the need of the programme or to take a break from the study field and remodel the study field from scratch because the expert group thinks the programme could be a strong one if it would follow the legal requirements and also would be more associated with NGOs or more related with project management.

The expert panel appreciates the warm welcoming of LCC staff during the site visit. However, had to notice that the LCC's Director could not be present, but all of the additional information was supplied.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Prof. dr. Teresa Paiva

(signature)